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PROGRAM Panorama

STATION WTTG TV

DATE March 22, 1982 12:00 Noon CITY Washington, DC

SUBJECT Interview with Jack Landau

ROSS CRYSTAL: On Thursday the Senate voted to make it a felony to disclose the names of United States intelligence operatives, which brought up and stirred a lot of debate. The measure is seen as a necessary step in protecting our agents; and as an invasion of the First Amendment rights, as many people see that.

We're going to talk about that right now. Joining us is Jack Maury, who's the President of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, and, understandably, quite happy, about that vote. Jack Landau is the Executive Director of the Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press, a group that disagrees.

A Senate version of this bill, a House version of this bill, which would make it, for the first time, a crime to publish information derived solely from public records, which are sometimes enough, as we've seen in the past, to figure out the names of CIA officers stationed abroad.

Why are we restricting, and what does seem to be a harsh restriction on journalists in this country? Why are we doing that?

JACK MAURY: I don't know why a legitimate journalist working on a story that would be of interest to the public has to get into the uncovering of agents under deep cover, with the result that their careers are jeopardized, and indeed their safety is also put in jeopardy sometimes. I think it'd be very hard to visualize a situation where that would present a serious problem to a responsible journalist.